

# MN 11: Cūlasīhanāda Sutta

## *The Lesser Discourse on the Lion's Roar*

Translated by Suddhāso Bhikkhu

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Sāvatti, at Jeta's Grove, in Anāthapiṇḍika's park. There the Blessed One addressed the monks: "Monks!" "Venerable sir," those monks replied to the Blessed One. The Blessed One said this:

"Monks, it is only here that there is the contemplative<sup>1</sup>, here that there is the second contemplative, here that there is the third contemplative, here that there is the fourth contemplative; other doctrines are empty of contemplatives. Monks, it is in just this way that you rightly roar a lion's roar.

"Monks, it is possible that a wanderer of another religion might say, 'But what is the Venerable's assurance, what is his strength, by means of which you say, "It is only here there is the contemplative... other doctrines are empty of contemplatives"?' Monks, this is what is to be said to wanderers of other religions who speak in that way: 'Venerable, we have four things which have been declared by the Blessed One, the Knower, the Seer, the Arahant, the fully enlightened one; seeing them in ourselves, we say, 'It is only here there is the contemplative... other doctrines are empty of contemplatives.' What four? Venerable, we have confidence in the Teacher<sup>2</sup>, we have confidence in the Dhamma, we are accomplished in virtue, and our co-practitioners are dear and agreeable to us - both householders and renunciants. Venerable, these are the four things which have been declared by the Blessed One, the Knower, the Seer, the Arahant, the fully enlightened one; which, seeing them in ourselves, we say, 'It is only here there is the contemplative... other doctrines are empty of contemplatives.'"

"Monks, it is possible that the wanderer of another religion might say, 'Venerable, we also have confidence in a teacher - our teacher. We also have confidence in Dhamma - our Dhamma. We also are accomplished in virtue - our virtue. And our co-practitioners also are dear and agreeable to us - both householders and renunciants. Venerable, what is the distinction here, what is the variance, what makes it different for you than it is for us?'

"Monks, this is what is to be said to wanderers of other religions who speak in that way: 'Venerable, is there one goal or many goals?' Monks, a wanderer of another religion who speaks correctly will answer in this way: 'Venerable, there is one goal, not many goals.'

"But, Venerable, is the goal for one who is lustful or for one who is free of lust?' Monks, a wanderer of another religion who speaks correctly will answer in this way: 'Venerable, the goal is for one who is free of lust, not for one who is lustful.'

"But, Venerable, is the goal for one who has hate or one who is free of hate?' Monks, a wanderer of another religion who speaks correctly will answer in this way: 'Venerable, the goal is for one who is free of hate, not for one who has hate.'

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1 *Samāna*. Usually this term refers to a spiritual practitioner of any religion; however, in this context it refers to a *successful* contemplative - that is, one who has attained some degree of enlightenment.

2 *Satthā*. An epithet of the Buddha.

“But, Venerable, is the goal for one who is deluded or for one who is free of delusion? Monks, a wanderer of another religion who speaks correctly will answer in this way: 'Venerable, the goal is for one who is free of delusion, not for one who is deluded.'

“But, Venerable, is the goal for one who has craving or for one who is free of craving? Monks, a wanderer of another religion who speaks correctly will answer in this way: 'Venerable, the goal is for one who is free of craving, not for one who has craving.'

“But, Venerable, is the goal for one who has clinging or for one who is free of clinging? Monks, a wanderer of another religion who speaks correctly will answer in this way: 'Venerable, the goal is for one who is free of clinging, not for one who has clinging.'

“But, Venerable, is the goal for one who is wise or for one who is unwise? Monks, a wanderer of another religion who speaks correctly will answer in this way: 'Venerable, the goal is for one who is wise, not for one who is unwise.'

“But, Venerable, is the goal for one who approves and rejects<sup>3</sup> or for one who does not approve or reject? Monks, a wanderer of another religion who speaks correctly will answer in this way: 'Venerable, the goal is for one who does not approve or reject, not for one who approves and rejects.'

“But, Venerable, is the goal for one who approves and rejects or for one who does not approve or reject? Monks, a wanderer of another religion who speaks correctly will answer in this way: 'Venerable, the goal is for one who does not approve or reject, not for one who approves and rejects.'

“But, Venerable, is the goal for one who delights in proliferation or for one who does not delight in proliferation? Monks, a wanderer of another religion who speaks correctly will answer in this way: 'Venerable, the goal is for one who does not delight in proliferation, not for one who delights in proliferation.'

“Monks, there are these two perspectives<sup>4</sup>: the perspective of existence and the perspective of non-existence. Monks, those contemplatives and priests<sup>5</sup> who are stuck on the perspective of existence, stay close to the perspective of existence, and adhere to the perspective of existence reject the perspective of non-existence. Monks, those contemplatives and priests who are stuck on the perspective of non-existence, stay close to the perspective of non-existence, and adhere to the perspective of non-existence reject the perspective of existence. Monks, this is what I say about those contemplatives and priests who do not accurately understand the origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape from those two perspectives: 'They have lust, hate, delusion, craving, and clinging; they are unwise, prone to approving and rejecting, delighting in proliferation. They have not been freed from birth, old age, dieing, sorrow, lamentation, pain, depression, and anguish; they have not been freed from suffering.'

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3 *Anuruddha-paṭiviruddha*. That is, one who is prone to bias based on personal preference.

4 *Ditṭhi*. From *dis* (to see). A *ditṭhi* is how one “sees” the world – a viewpoint, belief, or opinion.

5 *Brahmaṇa*.

“Monks, there are these four kinds of clinging. What four? Clinging to sensuality, clinging to perspectives, clinging to habitual practices, and clinging to self-belief<sup>6</sup>. Monks, there are some contemplatives and priests who claim to have a doctrine of the complete understanding of all clinging. They do not correctly make known the complete understanding of all clinging; they make known the complete understanding of clinging to sensuality, but they do not make known the complete understanding of clinging to perspectives, clinging to habitual practices, and clinging to self-belief. For what reason? Because these honorable contemplatives and priests do not accurately understand these three things. Therefore, although those honorable contemplatives and priests claim to have a doctrine of the complete understanding of all clinging, they do not correctly make known the complete understanding of all clinging – they make known the complete understanding of clinging to sensuality, but they do not make known the complete understanding of clinging to perspectives, clinging to habitual practices, and clinging to self-belief.

“Monks, there are some contemplatives and priests who claim to have a doctrine of the complete understanding of all clinging. They do not correctly make known the complete understanding of all clinging; they make known the complete understanding of clinging to sensuality and clinging to perspectives, but they do not make known the complete understanding of clinging to habitual practices and clinging to self-belief. For what reason? Because these honorable contemplatives and priests do not accurately understand these two things. Therefore, although those honorable contemplatives and priests claim to have a doctrine of the complete understanding of all clinging, they do not correctly make known the complete understanding of all clinging – they make known the complete understanding of clinging to sensuality and clinging to perspectives, but they do not make known the complete understanding of clinging to habitual practices and clinging to self-belief.

“Monks, there are some contemplatives and priests who claim to have a doctrine of the complete understanding of all clinging. They do not correctly make known the complete understanding of all clinging; they make known the complete understanding of clinging to sensuality, clinging to perspectives, and clinging to habitual practices, but they do not make known the complete understanding of clinging to self-belief. For what reason? Because these honorable contemplatives and priests do not accurately understand this one thing. Therefore, although those honorable contemplatives and priests claim to have a doctrine of the complete understanding of all clinging, they do not correctly make known the complete understanding of all clinging – they make known the complete understanding of clinging to sensuality, clinging to perspectives, and clinging to habitual practices, but they do not make known the complete understanding of clinging to self-belief.

“Monks, when it is in a Dhamma-Vinaya of that kind, confidence in the teacher is not said to be the right approach, faith in the Dhamma is not said to be the right approach, accomplishment in virtue is not said to be the right approach, and being dear and agreeable among one's co-practitioners is not said to be the right approach. For what reason? Monks, it is because it is in a poorly expounded Dhamma-Vinaya that is poorly

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6 *Atta-vāda*. The belief that one has a permanently existing essence of being.

declared, not conducive to true peace, and not declared by a completely enlightened being.

“Monks, the Tathāgata, the Arahant, the Completely Enlightened One, claims to have a doctrine of the complete understanding of all clinging. He correctly makes known the complete understanding of all clinging; he makes known the complete understanding of clinging to sensuality, clinging to perspectives, clinging to habitual practices, and clinging to self-belief. Monks, when it is in a Dhamma-Vinaya of that kind, confidence in the teacher is said to be the right approach, faith in the Dhamma is said to be the right approach, accomplishment in virtue is said to be the right approach, and being dear and agreeable among one's co-practitioners is said to be the right approach. For what reason? Monks, it is because it is in a well-expounded Dhamma-Vinaya that is well-declared, conducive to true peace, and declared by a completely enlightened being.

“Monks, there are these four kinds of clinging. What is their foundation, their origin, their birthplace, their source? These four kinds of clinging have craving as their foundation, craving as their origin, craving as their birthplace, craving as their source. And, monks, what is the foundation, origin, birthplace, and source of craving? Craving has feeling as its foundation, origin, birthplace, and source. And, monks, what is the foundation, origin, birthplace, and source of feeling? Feeling has sense contact as its foundation, origin, birthplace, and source. And, monks, what is the foundation, origin, birthplace, and source of sense contact? Sense contact has the sixfold extent<sup>7</sup> as its foundation, origin, birthplace, and source. And, monks, what is the foundation, origin, birthplace, and source of the sixfold extent? The sixfold extent has mind and body<sup>8</sup> as its foundation, origin, birthplace, and source. And, monks, what is the foundation, origin, birthplace, and source of mind and body? Mind and body has consciousness as its foundation, origin, birthplace, and source. And, monks, what is the foundation, origin, birthplace, and source of consciousness? Consciousness has conditional formations as its foundation, origin, birthplace, and source. And, monks, what is the foundation, origin, birthplace, and source of conditional formations? Conditional formations have ignorance as their foundation, origin, birthplace, and source.

“Monks, when there is a monk for whom ignorance has been abandoned and true knowledge has arisen, then because of that abandonment of ignorance and appearance of true knowledge he does not cling to sensuality, he does not cling to perspectives, he does not cling to habitual practices, and he does not cling to self-belief. Not clinging, he is not agitated. Not agitated, he personally attains Nibbāna. He knows: 'Birth has been eliminated. The Holy Life has been lived. What was to be done has been done. There will be no further existence here.'”

This is what the Blessed One said. Satisfied, those monks delighted in the Blessed One's speech.

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<sup>7</sup> *Salāyatana*. Sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and thought.

<sup>8</sup> *Nāma-rūpa*. Lit. “name and form.” Sometimes translated as “mentality and materiality.”